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DEPARTMENT FOR S/CT PWORMAN

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TAG PGOV, PREL, KTER, EG, JO
SUBJECT: JORDAN: IAF ISSUES STRONG FATWA AGAINST EGYPTIAN
WALL IN GAZA

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (S/NF) On January 9, 2010, the Islamic Shari'a Scholars Committee of the Islamic Action Front (IAF), the political wing of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, issued a fatwa (religious ruling) condemning Egyptian construction of a steel wall near Rafah. The significance of the fatwa lies not in the decision itself -- the proposed wall is deeply unpopular with practically all segments of Jordanian society, both religious and secular -- but rather with its harsh tone and its apparent readiness to support or condone violence against the Egyptian authorities. The fatwa is highly unusual in its willingness to address issues completely outside of Jordan and because of the force with which the scholars condemn the actions of a neighboring Arab and Muslim state. The full text of the fatwa is available at <http://opensource.dni.sgov.gov/mos2/mos2 frame main.html>.

¶2. (S/NF) The ruling cites the negative impact upon food security, health programs, economic development, and Gaza reconstruction closely followed by condemnation of the proposed barrier for "harming the mujahidin" by preventing the shipment of weapons and military supplies. The fatwa text includes the following lines:

- "The peak of jihad is fighting: fight the occupying usurper and continue fighting him until he is expelled and the land is purified of his filth. God said 'And slay them wherever ye find them and drive them out of the places whence they drove you out'."

- "The building of the wall is an obstruction of jihad. Aggression against the mujahidin and pursuing them is a crime that must be discontinued by the perpetrators. They must be confronted with all available means". Later in the document, the scholars state, "It is even the right of the people of Gaza and its mujahidin everywhere to confront this crime and its perpetrators, stop them, and stop the damage they are inflicting."

- In several other places the fatwa draws upon the Koran and other Islamic texts to compare those constructing the wall with those whose transgressions placed outside the Islamic faith in classical texts.

- Other passages of the text present an exceptionally hostile view of both Christians and Jews, and cast the conflict in a stark religious, as opposed to national or political, context.

¶3. (S/NF) COMMENT. This is an unusual pronouncement on the part of the IAF and it is unclear why the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood would stake out such a hard-line position on a dispute between Egypt and Hamas. The language of the fatwa in several different passages seems to justify or even

support violence against the Egyptians and it shows the influence of extremist thought not typically expressed by this organization.

14. (S/NF) Given other regional issues causing tension in Jordan, the GOJ appears reluctant to publicly oppose this fatwa and has yet to issue a comment. END COMMENT.
Beecroft